

*to Evangelical Religion.*

lence or virtue has been defined and enforced by ; authority; and that though a large portion of the sci\* must be, as matter of practice, mainly the same in dictates of that authority, and in the writings of Epictetus, or Cicero, or Antoninus, yet there is a specific difference of substance in certain particulars, and a most important one in the principles that constitute the general basis. While he is admiring the beauty of virtue as displayed by one accomplished moralist, and its lofty independence as exhibited by another, he is not admonished to suspect that anything in their sentiments, or his animated coalescence with them, can be wrong.

But the part of ancient literature which has had incomparably the greatest influence on the character of cultivated minds, is that which has turned, if I may so express it, moral sentiments into real beings and interesting companions, by displaying the life and actions of eminent individuals. A few of the personages of fiction are also to be included. The captivating spirit of Greece and Rome dwells in the works of the biographers ; in so much of the history as might properly be called biography, from its fixing the whole attention and interest on a few signal names ; and in the works of the principal poets.

No one, I suppose, will deny that both the characters and the sentiments, which are the favourites of the poet and the historian, become the favourites also of the admiring reader; for this would be a virtual denial of the excellence of the performance, in point of eloquence or poetic spirit. It is the high test and proof of genius that a writer can render his subject interesting to his readers, not merely in a general way, but in the *very same manner* in which it interests himself. If the great works of antiquity had not this power, they would long since have ceased to charm. We could not long tolerate what caused a revolting of our moral feelings, while it was designed to please them. But if their characters and sentiments really do thus fascinate the heart, how far will this influence be coincident with the-spirit and with the design of Christianity? \*

\* It may be noticed here that a great part of what could be said on-<sup>1</sup> heathen literature as opposed to the religion of Christ, must necessarily refer to the peculiar *moral spirit* of that religion. It would border on the